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Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/47/50.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In its resolution 43/178 of 20 December 1988, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to charge the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) with the supervision of the development of the programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to report to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in implementing the resolution. Pursuant to the resolution, the Secretary-General submitted a report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/46/204-E/1991/80 and Add.2) to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

2. Following its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/201 of 20 December 1991 on assistance to the Palestinian people, in which it, inter alia, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people; expressed its appreciation to the States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations that had provided assistance to the Palestinian people; requested the international community, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), taking into account the economic losses of the Palestinian people as a result of the Persian Gulf crisis; called for treatment on a transit basis of Palestinian exports and imports passing through neighbouring ports and points of exit and entry; also called for the granting of trade concessions and concrete preferential measures for Palestinian exports on the basis of Palestinian certificates of origin; further called for the immediate lifting of Israeli restrictions and obstacles hindering the implementation of assistance projects by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), other United Nations bodies and others providing economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory; reiterated its call for the implementation of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the projects mentioned in its resolution 39/233 of 18 December 1984; called for facilitation of the establishment of Palestinian development banks in the occupied Palestinian territory, with a view to promoting investment, production, employment and income therein; and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-seventh session, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress made in the implementation of the resolution.

3. On behalf of the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) wrote to the various concerned sources requesting information on the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution. Given below are the summaries of the replies received.

4. Any additional information received will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

II. REPLIES FROM THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A. United Nations

1. Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

5. At its thirty-sixth session, held at Vienna from 11 to 20 March 1992, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted draft resolution E/CN.6/1992/L.6, which, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to review developments in the situation of Palestinian women and children in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the refugee camps, and to submit a report to the Commission at its thirty-seventh session using all available sources. The Division for the Advancement of Women will be responsible for the preparation of that report and its submission to the forthcoming session of the Commission.

2. United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)

6. UNCHS (Habitat) prepared and submitted to the thirteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements a report entitled "Housing requirements of the Palestinian people" (HS/C/13/2/Add.1). The report was prepared pursuant to Commission resolution 12/1, which had requested the Executive Director of UNCHS (Habitat) "to devise a national housing development strategy to the year 2000 for the Palestinian people based on the Global Strategy for Shelter to the Year 2000 in cooperation with the PLO, including the housing requirements of a future independent Palestinian State". After its consideration of the report the Commission adopted resolution 13/6, in which it took note of the report "with satisfaction" and requested "the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Executive Director and in cooperation with the PLO, to devise a plan for the implementation of a shelter strategy for the Palestinian people to the year 2000, as contained in the report of the Executive Director on the housing requirements of the Palestinian people, together with the provision of necessary funds". The Executive Director is presently in the process of preparing that report, on behalf of the Secretary-General, for submission to the fourteenth session of the Commission on Human Settlements, which will be held at Nairobi from 26 April to 5 May 1993.

7. UNCHS (Habitat) is also in the process of taking appropriate action with a view to preparing, on behalf of the Secretary-General, a report on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council. The report is being prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/162 of 19 December 1991, which requested the Secretary-General "to consider ways and means of improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and, pending the exercise of their right to self-determination, to plan for concerted economic and social actions by the United Nations system".

3. United Nations Children's Fund

Introduction

8. Since 1980, UNICEF has supported programmes for Palestinian children and women in Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza. The programmes supported in close collaboration with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and relevant United Nations agencies include: health; pre-school and primary education; women's programmes; water supply and sanitation; and a physiotherapy programme for the West Bank and Gaza Strip following the intifadah. The major objective of UNICEF assistance was to reduce infant mortality and morbidity through improvement of primary health care; immunization; health education; control of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infection; promotion of safe delivery practices and provision of safe drinking-water and sanitation. Following the crisis in the Persian Gulf a special effort was made to sustain these programmes. Over the period from 1980 to 1991, total UNICEF support for Palestinians increased from US$ 212,278 in 1980 to $957,276 in 1985, and $1,773,863 in 1991.

9. The UNICEF Executive Board passed resolution 1991/15 requesting the Executive Director of UNICEF "to continue to urgently assess the situation of Palestinian children and women and to provide funds commensurate with the expanding needs of these children and women and to report to the 1992 session of the Executive Board on implementation". As a result, the total sum of funds approved for Palestinians had increased from $1,773,863 in 1991 to $3,234,400 in 1992. Of the latter, $1,734,400 is dependent on supplementary funding being made available by donors.

Palestinians in Jordan

10. UNICEF cooperation with UNRWA in giving support to immunization activities, control of diarrhoeal disease and acute respiratory infection contributed considerably in reducing infant mortality rate from 59 to 35 per 1,000 live births during the period from 1980 to 1990. Immunization coverage levels for DPT3 (diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus) and OPV3 (oral polio vaccine) were increased from 30 per cent in 1980 to 99 per cent. During the same period, mortality due to diarrhoeal diseases was reduced from more than 3,000 to just 100 per year. Other programmes supported by UNICEF included income-generating activities and basic health education for mothers.

11. A new programme of cooperation for the period 1990-1994 approved by the Executive Board in 1990 aims to sustain the gains made in the fields of immunization, control of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infection. It also places increased emphasis on promoting safe motherhood in order to reduce birth defects. Two new programmes initiated are the early childhood development programme, which involves both kindergarten teachers and parents in effective stimulation of young children, and an action-oriented health project in which teachers are trained to pass vital information to children.

12. The type of assistance provided is provision of vaccines and syringes and the cold chain equipment programme; provision of oral rehydration salts; training of 100 UNRWA medical and paramedical staff in primary health care, safe motherhood and early detection of disabilities, and nutrition education for mothers; a comprehensive health education programme for women; support for a survey on child morbidity; and a media campaign on disability prevention.

13. Following the Gulf Crisis, most of the 350,000 Jordanian returnees from the Gulf were Palestinians. The sudden loss in remittances that their return entailed sent thousands of Palestinian families into instant poverty. Thus, in 1991, UNICEF cooperation with UNRWA and relevant non-governmental organizations in the field of health, education and early childhood development was stepped up.

14. In addition to the continued supply of sufficient vaccines, syringes and oral rehydration salts to meet the entire needs of the UNRWA expanded programme of immunization and the programme for the control of diarrhoeal diseases, paediatric antibiotic syrups for control of acute respiratory infection and essential drugs were provided. Support was given to Palestinian non-governmental organizations to expand health education for women. The manual "Your Child and Its Health" was distributed widely and incorporated into the curriculum of women's literacy and vocational training courses. UNICEF provided specialized testing equipment to the Disability Detection and Rehabilitation Centre in Bekaa camp and trained staff at the Centre to train mothers on early detection of disability. Support was also given for training 126 UNRWA medical and paramedical staff and 40 Palestinian traditional birth attendants on a range of basic health issues. Twenty Palestinian mothers selected from literacy classes were trained to be trainers in early childhood development. They in turn organized talks and discussions for mothers on the importance of early child development. Thirty-five Palestinian kindergarten teachers were trained to make use of the newly developed standardized kindergarten teaching manual. A total of 35 Palestinian early child specialists received training as part of the Jordan's community outreach programme. Learning materials and equipment were provided to 35 UNRWA and non-governmental kindergartens to create a more stimulating learning environment.

Palestinians in the Syrian Arab Republic

15. In collaboration with UNRWA, UNICEF has contributed to child survival. Partly as the result of universal child immunization being attained several years ahead of the 1990 target, the majority of mothers being made aware through an effective community education campaign on how to prevent dehydration during diarrhoeal diseases, provision of safe water supply and sewage network for 7,000 people and an increased quantity of water supply to an additional 6,000 people in eight camps, infant mortality was reduced from 41 to 33 per 1,000 live births during the period from 1984 to 1990. UNICEF, in collaboration with the General Organization of Palestinian Arab Refugees, the Syrian government agency responsible for Palestinians, has also provided educational materials, basic equipment, furniture and kindergarten teacher training in refugee camps.

16. In 1991 the Executive Board approved a new programme of assistance in the amount of $1.6 million for the period from 1991 to 1994. The programme includes: (a) health (immunization, control of diarrhoeal diseases and acute respiratory infections); (b) women's development programme (which aims to reduce female illiteracy from 25 to 15 per cent, increase women's share in the labour force from 11 to 25 per cent and reduce neonatal and maternal mortality and morbidity by 25 per cent by 1994; and (c) early childhood development (to early childhood stimulation).

17. Given the hardship experienced by the Palestinian community as a result of the Crisis in the Persian Gulf, UNICEF-supported activities in 1991 focused particularly on the health programme. UNICEF continued to provide UNRWA with vaccines, syringes, cold chain equipment and oral rehydration salts. Social mobilization activities for both fields were integrated with national awareness-raising efforts. The acute respiratory infection control programme included development of recording and monitoring systems, medial promotion on prevention treatment and distribution of health education materials. UNICEF and UNFPA collaborated in training Palestinian traditional birth attendants.

18. The early childhood activities focused on improving teaching-learning materials, training kindergarten teachers and upgrading the quality of care in kindergartens. Increased attention is now being placed on early childhood development in the home.

19. Women's development activities concentrated on training of literacy instructors and programme supervision and on collaboration with Palestinian institutes providing women's income-generating activities. While overall market analysis has been undertaken to identify potential new fields of activities, toys and games were produced for use in kindergartens.

20. As UNICEF continues to work closely with UNRWA, increased attention is being given to fostering community action and to exploring more fully the potential of the extensive network of non-governmental organizations and other grassroots organizations in the Palestinian community.

Palestinians in Lebanon

21. In the past, UNICEF cooperated with international and Palestinian associates in training traditional birth attendants and nurses, and in promoting safe motherhood, diarrhoeal disease control, breast-feeding and personal hygiene. UNICEF channelled its assistance for immunization through UNRWA and also directly provided other health supplies, essential drugs and oral rehydration salts.

22. In the field of early childhood development, in cooperation with Palestinian organizations, UNICEF assisted the establishment of 22 modest child-care centres and helped to rehabilitate 24 others, bringing the total to 83 centres serving 7,760 children.

23. In a country where during the 15 years of civil war violence and destruction have become a way of life, the UNICEF-sponsored education for peace programme has been an important effort and continues to attract a large number of Palestinian children. During the summer of 1989 and again in 1990, 2,000 Palestinian children were brought together with Lebanese children in a summer camp so as to learn peaceful living. In the women's development programme, both collective and individual self-support income-generating projects continue to be supported.

24. Another focus of UNICEF support has been the rebuilding of war-damaged water and sanitation infrastructure in the Palestinian refugees camps. The activities included drilling, connecting new wells, rehabilitating old ones, providing water tanks and pipe connections, and provision of generators to 22 UNRWA schools. A sewage system was also installed in one camp.

25. The new five-year programme of assistance for the period 1992-1996 has been prepared for submission to the Executive Board in 1992 to continue to strengthen UNICEF activities in the main fields outlined above. As a programme review has indicated that facilities and services for Palestinians in centres for displaced persons are of a much lower level than those available for the camp population, the underserved centres will receive special attention during the new programme cycle. Another major priority will be development of more reliable baseline data and the situation of Palestinian women and children in Lebanon.

West Bank and Gaza

26. UNICEF began its programme of cooperation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1980 following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 33/112 B of 18 December 1978, which called on United Nations agencies to provide humanitarian support to the Palestinian people.

27. During the 1980s, UNICEF, in cooperation with UNRWA, helped achieve and sustain universal child immunization and promote oral rehydration salts. UNICEF provided UNRWA with vaccines, syringes and cold chain supplies and contributed to the high expanded programme of immunization coverage among the registered refugee population. The use of oral rehydration salts and oral rehydration therapy has been promoted consistently. Village health workers, traditional birth attendants and supervisors have been trained. In the area of eary childhood development, prototype child development centres for the early detection and rehabilitation of childhood disabilities were established; kindergarten teachers were trained; and sanitation facilities and basic furniture were provided. The relatively limited water supply project focused on the protection of rain-fed shallow wells in 25 villages. The joint UNRWA/UNICEF emergency physiotherapy programme has continued to evolve, with five centres now operating in Gaza and two in the West Bank. Since 1988, 4,500 patients have received physiotherapy rehabilitation for physical injuries.

28. In the field of education, UNICEF also cooperated with UNRWA in two projects aiming to respond to the acute problem of declining achievement levels of children in primary schools. A project to develop proper classroom diagnostic testing and an associated remedial education programme was initiated, together with a project to develop distance learning techniques and materials.

29. In response to resolution 1991/15, passed in April 1991 by the UNICEF Executive Board, the level of UNICEF presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip was upgraded with the appointment of a resident international project officer. UNICEF's sub-office was moved from Ramallah to Jerusalem, with administrative support provided by UNDP.

30. The first comprehensive situation analysis of the status of Palestinian children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been prepared. The report includes assessment of the effects of the crisis in the Persian Gulf on children in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Highlights include dramatic economic decline, health services at risk, problems of educational achievement due to prolonged school closures, and concerns over the psychosocial health of Palestinian children.

31. Based on this analysis, UNICEF is submitting a three-year programme (1992-1994) to the Executive Board at its 1992 session, which delineates action in child health, education and programme for childhood disability and rehabilitation.

4. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

32. Within the scope of its work programme, the UNCTAD secretariat has intensified its activities of assistance to the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip). These have included the following activities.

33. A report entitled "Recent economic developments in the occupied Palestinian territory" (TD/B/1305) was prepared. This document constitutes the seventh annual report prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat, for consideration by the Trade and Development Board at its 38th session (first part). The report discusses the policy environment affecting the Palestinian economy since 1990 in the light of prevailing constraints amidst new pressures, including the impact of the Middle East crisis, Israeli measures and Palestinian initiatives. This is followed by an examination of aggregate economic indicators (GDP, GNP, savings, investment and consumptions); population, labour force and employment; and performance in selected sectors (including agriculture, industry and external trade, as well as tourism and the monetary and fiscal situation). The report also highlights elements of a programme for the immediate revival of the Palestinian economy and briefly reviews progress in the work of the Special Economic Unit (Palestinian people) at the UNCTAD secretariat.

34. During the period under review, the work of the Special Economic Unit continued to focus on the preparation of the intersectoral project on prospects for sustained economic and social development in the occupied Palestinian territory. This included initiating, reviewing and revising the 25 sectoral studies being prepared by experts in the occupied Palestinian territory, with work so far concentrating on the first part of each of these studies, covering the current situation and immediate needs in each of the areas under investigation. This part of the studies is now completed.

35. In order to guide work on the second part of each of the 25 individual studies, dealing with future prospects of the Palestinian economy, a technical study is nearing completion at the UNCTAD secretariat. The study provides an in-depth technical/quantitative framework for future prospects, to guide experts in the preparation of the second and third parts of the individual studies. It concentrates on alternative strategies and policy options to be consolidated and integrated under the respective parts of the intersectoral project. This should include the frame of a programme of action aimed at supporting the efforts of the Palestinian people in setting their economy on the path of sustained growth and development. The intersectoral project is now scheduled to be completed by the second half of 1992.

36. As part of the requirements for the parametric exercise in connection with the above-mentioned quantitative framework, work on the development of the UNCTAD secretariat's database on the Palestinian economy was further intensified. Statistical series, covering national income, population, labour and employment, balance of payments and external trade, were compiled, standardized and classified along the lines of the economic time series in use at the UNCTAD secretariat and stored in the computer facilities of the secretariat for future reference.

37. In addition to the above-mentioned report (TD/B/1305), the following publications were produced during the period under review and may be obtained from the Special Economic Unit at UNCTAD:

(a) "Select bibliography on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip)" (UNCTAD/RDP/SEU/5, Arabic and English only). This document contains a select bibliography of some 800 references issued in Arabic and English on the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory, including books, articles, monographs and United Nations documents. References are presented in two parts, covering those in Arabic and those in English, while in each part the references are grouped first according to the subject classification adopted by the United Nations Bibliographical Information Systems (UNBIS) and subsequently according to alphabetical sequence of authors.

(b) "Selected national accounts series of the occupied Palestinian territory (West Bank and Gaza Strip), 1968-1987" (UNCTAD/RDP/SEU/6, English only). It deals with the standardized national accounts series of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory and is classified in accordance with the

economic time series in use at the UNCTAD secretariat. The series are based on official data published by the Israel Carthal Bureau of Statistics and exclude East Jerusalem.

(c) "The tourism sector and related services in the Palestinian territory under Israeli occupation" (UNCTAD/RDP/SEU/7). This in-depth study constitutes the first comprehensive investigation to date of the relatively neglected sector of tourism and related services in the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza Strip. It draws on a field survey conducted in 1990/1991 and on various sources of statistical and qualitative information. It consists of five chapters examining the Palestinian tourism sector before 1967, the natural endowment and socio-cultural heritage of the occupied Palestinian territory; major factors affecting the Palestinian tourism sector since 1967, in particular the impact of Israeli policy measures; the economic role of the Palestinian tourism sector between 1967 and 1990, including the structure and performance of Palestinian tourism branches during the period; and immediate needs and prospects for reviving the tourism sector in the occupied Palestinian territory.

38. The UNCTAD secretariat has continued to cooperate with the UNCTAD/GATT International Trade Centre (ITC) with a view to finalizing the project document for the establishment of a marketing centre in the occupied territory for Palestinian agricultural goods. Meanwhile, consultations are also under way with ITC, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNDP for fielding a mission of experts to prepare a feasibility study for the establishment of a marketing centre for Palestinian industrial goods.

5. United Nations Development Programme

Programme delivery

39. After the total interruption of field work during the war in the Persian Gulf, activities resumed at the same fast pace observed in 1990. Consequently, the 1991 project expenditures are expected to reach a level close to that of 1990, namely, $11 million.

Financial situation

40. The core resources of the Programme have been provided by the Governing Council through allocations from special programme resources. These allocations are the following:

		Millions of United States dollars
Second cycle	(1980-1981)	3.5
Third cycle	(1982-1986)	10.0
Fourth cycle	(1987-1991)	12.0
Fifth cycle	(1992-1996)	15.0

41. Since the inception of the Programme, complementary resources have been provided by Italy ($8.7 million), Japan ($5 million), the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) ($1 million), the United States of America ($1 million), Jordan ($457,000), Canada ($400,000), Greece ($80,000) and Tunisia ($48,500).

42. These non-core resources have been provided under funds-in-trust or management service agreements.

43. The Administrator wishes to express his appreciation for the growing financial support enjoyed by the Programme.

Project highlights

(a) Income-generation

44. In the agriculture sector, new irrigation channels are being completed in the El-Duyuk area (West Bank), benefiting some 200 farmers, while modern irrigation equipment is now being distributed to farmers of the Gaza Strip under a project that is to benefit 1,000 farmers.

45. In Jericho, a honey-processing plant was installed, thereby completing a project that has provided 200 bee swarms and hives, medicines, training and technical support to nearly 300 beekeepers of both the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

46. In Nablus, construction of a marketing centre and industrial zone is nearing completion. Consisting of three large buildings, it will house 87 shops and workshops for light industries as well as a refrigerated storage room of 500 cubic metres for agricultural products. Approximately 300 business people will benefit from these new and modern installations.

47. The Business Development Centre is continuing its training activities in the fields of management, feasibility studies and marketing. The Centre will soon start its lending operations and work on the most promising requests for financial support is now being finalized.

48. In Gaza, the construction of a packing and grading facility for fruits and vegetables has started. Its completion is expected by the end of 1991. It will handle seven to eight tons of non-citrus fruits and vegetables per day per shift.

49. The manufacturing of the equipment for the citrus-processing plant to be installed in the Gaza Strip is progressing. The plant, which will have a capacity of 20 tons per hour and will thus be able to process one third of Gaza's citrus production, should be operational by the end of 1992.

(b) Social sectors

50. The construction of four new schools was completed in 1991. Two are in Nablus, one is in Hebron and the fourth is in the Gaza Strip. Three others are under way in the West Bank. In addition, new laboratories are being constructed and will be finalized before the end of the year at the Arab Medical College in Ramallah.

51. In the health field, rapid progress is being made on the construction of a new wing for the Hebron Hospital. It is expected to be completed by April 1992.

(c) Infrastructure

52. Water supply schemes were finalized in 14 villages of the West Bank. They consisted of the improvement of wells, the construction of pumping stations, the building of water reservoirs and the installation of distribution networks and house connections. Over 80,000 Palestinians are benefiting from these various schemes.

53. In the energy field, by installing electricity generators in eight villages of the West Bank and training local villagers in their use, maintenance and repair, thus ensuring an independent and reliable supply of energy, UNDP helped improve significantly the living and working conditions of some 45,000 Palestinians.

54. In the Gaza Strip, work is being finalized on the sewage collections, treatment and disposal systems in both the Jabaliya refugee camp and the city of Gaza. An operation and maintenance project has also been started with the purpose of giving full training to the technical staff of the Jabaliya village council and the Gaza municipality in order to ensure the smooth running of the system after the end of UNDP assistance.

6. United Nations Environment Programme

55. At its sixteenth session in May 1991, the Governing Council of UNEP considered the report prepared by the Executive Director on the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories (UNEP/GC.16/5).

56. The Council also adopted decision 16/13 in which it, inter alia, requested the Executive Director, pending the achievement by the United Nations of a political solution to the question of the occupied territories, to take the actions and measures capable of halting environmental deterioration in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and to provide the necessary assistance for protecting the natural resources in the area and for securing harmonious living conditions for the entire population.

57. The Council also requested the Executive Director to take all necessary measures to complete the database of information about the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories.

58. UNEP has started consultations with the PLO through their representatives at Nairobi regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Governing Council decisions. The Executive Director of UNEP will report on this matter to the Governing Council, as requested, at its seventeenth session, in 1993.

7. United Nations Population Fund

59. In the past, UNFPA has supported two types of activity, fellowships and primary health care research. Under its fellowship programme UNFPA allocated $230,780 (1986-1990) to support six fellowships for post-graduate studies in demography and related topics. This training component was part of the UNDP-financed programme designed to enhance the educational level of faculty staff for teaching at the Bir Zeit and Al-Najah Universities in the occupied territory.

60. As regards primary health care research in the West Bank and Gaza, UNFPA allocated $91,035 in the period 1987-1988 to support maternal and child health research and training activities at the WHO primary health care research centres. The long-term objectives of the project were to strengthen the capacity of the health services of the West Bank and Gaza to conduct health systems research at the primary and first referral levels, and to support research projects specifically relating to maternal and child health.

61. More recently, UNFPA has been requested by UNRWA to assist the Palestinian non-governmental organizations involved in providing expanded maternal health services in the West Bank and Gaza, and providing a level of care for women at high risk of complications to avoid maternal and perinatal morbidity and mortality. The immediate objectives to be fulfilled by 1995 are: (a) to have increased coverage of prenatal and postnatal care; (b) to have increased provision of hospital delivery for high-risk women; (c) to have conducted research and baseline studies essential to evaluation and planning of maternal/reproductive health care and the provision of family planning services; and (d) to have contributed to families' understanding of the need for and benefit of birth spacing related to maternal and reproductive care.

8. United Nations Relief and Works Agency

Introduction

62. In 1992, UNRWA is continuing to provide education, health, relief and social services and other humanitarian assistance to more than 2.5 million Palestine refugees in its five fields of operation, namely Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In addition, emergency measures are being carried out in Lebanon and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A full account of UNRWA's activities can be found in the reports of the Commissioner-General to the General Assembly. 1/

63. The following is a brief summary of the Agency's present activities. An indication of the level of UNRWA's assistance to the Palestine refugees is provided by the budget figures. In the biennium 1992-1993, UNRWA's regular budget is approximately $572 million. The emergency measures in Lebanon and the occupied territory are planned to continue at a cost of $40 million. In addition to the regular and emergency budgets, about $40 million has been pledged or received since 1988 on the expanded programme of assistance referred to in paragraph 72 below. UNRWA employs approximately 18,500 staff, the vast majority of whom are themselves Palestine refugees, and is thus one of the largest employers in the Middle East.

Education

64. The objective of the Agency's education programme is to provide, within the framework of the host countries' prescribed school curricula, general education at the elementary and preparatory levels, teacher and higher education, and vocational and technical education for Palestine refugees, in accordance with their educational needs, identity and cultural heritage. The programme operates with technical assistance from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In the 1991/1992 school year, the Agency has more than 374,000 pupils enrolled in 636 schools staffed by almost 11,000 teachers and is providing training for more than 5,200 vocational and teacher trainees in its eight training centres. Schools and training centres in the occupied territory are presently open but, throughout the period of the intifadah, education has been severely disrupted by strikes, curfews, disturbances and closure orders imposed by the Israeli authorities. After many years of disruption, most schools in Lebanon are now operating relatively normally.

Health

65. The UNRWA health programme comprises medical care and health protection and promotion delivered through 116 health centres and points, environmental health services in camps and distribution of food supplements to vulnerable groups. The Agency's health protection and promotion activities focus particularly upon disease control and maternal and child health care. Mental health projects have been started in the West Bank and Gaza. Medical care includes, inter alia, dental treatment. A physiotherapy programme is being

run in conjunction with UNICEF in six clinics in Gaza and five in the West Bank. The programme operates with technical assistance from the World Health Organization (WHO). The continuation of the intifadah and countermeasures employed by the Israeli authorities have had their effect upon UNRWA health services in the occupied territory. The Agency has had to give increased priority to emergency and casualty care provided in the camps, while at the same time maintaining its regular health activities in all areas in spite of interruptions caused by curfews, strikes, disturbances and the declaration of certain areas as closed military zones.

66. Besides continuing these services, the UNRWA health programme is focusing on the implementation of a number of new strategies in 1992, including family planning in the context of maternal health, reduction of doctor/patient ratios in health centres to a manageable level and the creation of consultative mechanisms to enable Palestinians to express their priorities in health care. The Agency's highest priority in respect of external funding will, however, be given to environmental health and, in particular, to planning and first-stage implementation of master plans for sewage disposal and safe water supply in the occupied territory and Lebanon. The Agency is also continuing with its project for constructing, equipping and commissioning a 232-bed hospital in Gaza at a cost of $35 million, $20 million of which represents capital costs and $15 million operating costs for the first three years.

Relief and social services

67. The relief and social services programme provides support to the Palestine refugees ("special hardship cases") and facilitates self-reliance. The programme consists of assistance to special hardship cases, social case work, self-support grants and related skill training, women's programmes, rehabilitation of the disabled and assistance to refugees in emergency situations.

68. These activities are continuing in 1992. In view of the continuing deterioration of the socio-economic situation in the UNRWA area of operations, the number of special hardship cases will be increased Agency-wide by approximately 5 per cent, to more than 170,000. Emphasis is being placed on setting up small group enterprises to provide employment, especially for women from special hardship families and the disabled. The community-based rehabilitation programme for the disabled is continuing and a review of its development to date will be the basis of a joint UNRWA-non-governmental organization discussion of future strategy in May 1992. In the occupied territory, projects are being developed aiming at the vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, in particular former bread-winners injured during the intifadah.

Extraordinary measures

69. In response to the additional needs created by the intifadah and the Israeli response, UNRWA introduced a programme of extraordinary measures, which, beginning in early 1988, have been extended through 1989, 1990, 1991

and 1992. The large number of casualties resulting from the intifadah has led to a considerable expansion of the emergency medical programme. These measures are continuing in 1992, with five clinics open 24 hours a day and the remainder open in two shifts in Gaza, while 11 clinics run double shifts in the West Bank. Additional medical supplies and equipment, including 16 ambulances for the evacuation of casualties, have been purchased and the payment of hospital costs and subsidies has been increased.

70. Welfare services have been expanded to assist the families of those killed, disabled or detained and to cope with the far-reaching socio-economic effects of the intifadah. Additional food is being provided to needy people in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and needy families have received cash grants. An important element of the Agency's extraordinary measures in the occupied territory is the programme of general assistance and protection. The major component of this programme is the placing of 12 international staff members in the West Bank and 9 in the Gaza Strip as refugee affairs officers. These staff members facilitate Agency operation in the difficult prevailing circumstances and assist the refugee population in their day-to-day life. The refugee affairs officers help by their presence to lower tensions, especially during confrontations with the security forces, and to prevent maltreatment of the refugees, especially vulnerable groups such as women and children.

71. The situation prevailing in Lebanon has required the Agency to carry out programmes of emergency and extraordinary measures for a number of years. In 1992, these include, inter alia, distribution of foodstuffs, cash assistance to the most needy and assistance to displaced persons.

Expanded programme of assistance

72. In 1988, UNRWA launched an expanded programme of assistance consisting of approximately 200 projects to improve living conditions and infrastructure in the camps in the occupied territory. A target working figure of $40 million had been received or pledged by March 1992. A high priority in the expanded programme of assistance is to ensure that refugees living in the 27 camps of the West Bank and Gaza Strip have decent shelter and a sanitary environment. Accordingly, substantial efforts are being made in repairing and constructing refugee shelters and in upgrading the standard of rehabilitation. The Agency will also continue to improve camp infrastructure and primary health care facilities, including construction and equipment of additional health centres, internal sewage systems and integration of camp water and sewage schemes into municipal and regional systems. It has recently been decided to extend the scope of the expanded programme of assistance to cover not only the occupied territory but also the Agency's other three fields. Major related projects currently under way include shelter rehabilitation schemes and construction of sewage networks in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza.

73. In the aftermath of the war in the Persian Gulf, the socio-economic situation in the occupied territory, already serious after more than three years of intifadah and Israeli countermeasures, became critical. As part of its efforts to relieve unemployment and assist the stagnant economy, UNRWA is

implementing a new income-generating and job-creation scheme. Priority is being given to new or expanded enterprises that use labour-intensive methods of production. Individuals as well as cooperatives, partnerships and other types of groups are eligible to apply for loans. In Gaza, loans totalling more than $200,000 have already been granted and loans are beginning to be made in the West Bank.

9. World Food Programme

74. The WFP project, "Assistance to the Palestinian people", with a total WFP cost of $871,900, has provided food aid and cash (for the purchase of local food) to assist Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The assistance was channelled through local institutions to hospital patients, orphanages and destitute families. Distribution of WFP commodities started in mid-September 1991 and terminated by the end of March 1992.

75. In order to sustain assistance, particularly to the most needy, WFP on 29 January 1992 transmitted to the Civil Administration (Israeli authorities) a note outlining its intention to continue assistance to targeted beneficiaries. To date, WFP has not received an official response from the Israeli authorities. The note proposes the extension of the feeding project, specifically to generate employment in local institutions and to provide food to hospital patients and orphans.

B. Specialized agencies

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

76. At its twenty-fifth session, in November 1989, the FAO Conference requested the Director-General to "send a mission to study and evaluate the situation of the agricultural sector in the occupied Palestinian territory, taking into consideration the conditions of the farmers under the existing occupation policies and practices, and to prepare a report comprising possible technical interventions to be executed by FAO". In addition, the Conference requested the Director-General to organize a symposium on the Palestinian agricultural sector and to include the occupied Palestinian territory in future FAO programmes and activities.

77. The Symposium on the Palestinian Agricultural Sector took place at Rome from 9 to 11 October 1991. It was attended by 15 consultants and experts selected from the occupied Palestinian territories in the West Bank and Gaza in their personal technical capacity and by representatives from the United Nations organizations (the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services; UNDP; UNCTAD; ITC; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); WFP; UNRWA; and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA); the League of Arab States, the "Al-Quds" Open University and the PLO.

78. Papers were presented on the following three subjects, leading to constructive discussions on identifying measures to improve agricultural development in the occupied Palestinian territories:

(a) The present situation of the agricultural sector in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(b) Present agricultural policies and their impact on agricultural development in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(c) Institutional support to agricultural development in the occupied Palestinian territories.

79. The recommendations of the symposium included the urgent need for a long-term plan for water development and conservation, studies on land and soil conservation, studies on dry-land farming, regulation of fertilizers and other chemicals, seeds and seedling production, national institutions for agricultural services, development of livestock, national institutions for agricultural data and assistance in the marketing of produce.

80. A mission to the occupied Palestinian territories was fielded from 23 August to 6 September 1991. It was led by Mr. Declan Walton, former Deputy Director-General of FAO, and also comprised Mr. Adel Cortas, Assistant to the Assistant Director-General, Economic and Social Policy Department, and Mr. Rene Branckaert, Animal Production Officer, Animal Production and Health Division, FAO.

81. The 26th FAO Conference, held in November 1991, endorsed the approach to technical assistance recommended by the mission and attached particular attention to action in the following areas: preparation of a comprehensive strategy as well as programmes and projects to ensure the sustainability of irrigated farming; recommendations for the future of citrus production in Gaza in the light of increasing water salinity and decreasing water availability for agriculture; preparation of a comprehensive study on the development of agricultural institutions, particularly for agricultural planning, credit and marketing; preparation of detailed studies on the issues highlighted by the mission with regard to pests and diseases, soil erosion, use of agricultural by-products for livestock feed, maintenance and repair of pumps and farm equipment, and development of rangelands. The problems of environmental degradation reported by the mission were considered to deserve special attention.

82. The Conference requested the Director-General to bring the recommendations of the mission and the conclusions of the Conference to the attention of all potential donors who might be interested in providing support for the Palestinian agricultural sector, either through FAO or directly under their own programmes. In addition, the Conference requested the Director-General to approach UNDP and other possible multilateral and bilateral donors for extrabudgetary support that might be required for specific projects formulated in the course of further work.

83. In order to fulfil the above-mentioned recommendations of the 26th FAO Conference, negotiations are under way with the ESCWA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division at Amman and the UNDP Office at Jerusalem for organizing a new joint FAO/UNDP identification/formulation mission during 1992. The objective of the mission is the formulation of an umbrella technical assistance project for presentation to potential donors. Furthermore, contacts are being made with all potential donors, multilateral funding agencies, regional development banks and funds, to identify and formulate agricultural investment projects for the occupied territories. All programme activities will be planned and implemented in cooperation with the UNDP Office at Jerusalem.

2. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

84. With regard to the matters raised in General Assembly resolution 44/235, GATT wishes to draw attention to the following provisions of the Agreement.

85. Article V, concerning freedom of transit, is aimed at ensuring that goods in transit through the territories of contracting parties are not subject to delays and restrictions and are exempt from customs duties and other charges, except charges commensurate with administrative expenses or with the cost of services rendered. It should be noted, however, that these obligations apply only to traffic in transit to or from contracting parties. Any contracting party is, however, free to extend such benefits to countries other than contracting parties.

86. In respect of preferential treatment of exports, GATT wishes to point out that the decision of 28 November 1979 of the contracting parties on differential and more favourable treatment, reciprocity and fuller participation of developing countries (the so-called enabling clause) foresees that developed contracting parties to GATT may accord preferential tariff treatment - and in certain circumstances preferential treatment with respect to non-tariff measures - to products originating in developing countries in accordance with the generalized system of preferences. The selection of developing countries that would benefit from such preferences is a matter to be decided by each preference-granting Government.

3. International Fund for Agricultural Development

87. Article 2 of the Agreement establishing IFAD states that "the object of the fund shall be to mobilize additional resources to be made available on concessional terms for agricultural development in developing member States".

88. Section 1 (b), article 7, of the same Agreement lays down, inter alia that IFAD is to provide financing only to developing States that are members of IFAD.

89. On the eligibility of a State to become a member of IFAD, section 1 (a) of article 3 states that "membership of the fund shall be open to any State,

member of the United Nations or any of its specialized agencies, or of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

90. IFAD therefore has not provided any assistance to the Palestinian people.

4. International Labour Organisation

91. ILO is pursuing its efforts with a view to implementing and developing its technical assistance programme in the occupied Arab territories. Its current projects concern vocational training, trade union training and rehabilitation of handicapped persons.

92. Furthermore, the Director-General of ILO is preparing his annual report on the situation of the Arab workers of the occupied Arab territories, to be submitted to the forthcoming International Labour Conference in June 1992. Two missions to the region, one to the Arab countries and the other to Israel and the occupied Arab territories, have been sent recently with a view to collecting the latest available information on this subject.

5. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

93. In addition to UNESCO's programme of assistance to the occupied territories in the field of education and culture, UNESCO has provided in 1991 financial assistance of US$ 50,000 to Palestinian educational institutions affected by the crisis in the Persian Gulf under its special emergency assistance funds devoted to the crisis.

6. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

94. The Fourth General Conference of UNIDO in November 1991 adopted, inter alia, resolution GC.4/Res.7, in which it requested UNIDO to increase its technical assistance to the Palestinian people in close cooperation with the PLO.

95. Following the adoption of resolution GC.4/Res.7, a focal point and a team of staff members were created within UNIDO to monitor the development of the Palestinian industrial sector and to better develop and coordinate the activities related to technical assistance to the Palestinian people.

96. In February 1992, the focal point visited UNDP in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, to initiate and establish a foundation for future collaboration with UNDP with respect to programme and project development and implementation. A joint review was undertaken on the progress made in preparation for a UNDP needs assessment report covering technical assistance to the Palestinian people. As a result of the mission and the review, areas have been identified where UNIDO assistance may be required in the framework of ongoing and future UNDP activities.

97. In view of the general stringency of financial resouces, UNIDO is planning to secure extrabudgetary resources to initiate new activities and to provide technical services to the UNDP programme for assistance to the Palestinian people in the industry sector at programme and project level.

Notes

1/ The report for the period 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991 can be found in Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 13 (A/46/13); the report for the period 1 July 1991 to 30 June 1992 will be presented to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.